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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 001627

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/ERA AND EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/20/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [SENV](#) [ECON](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR SILVERBERG,S CONVERSATION WITH SPANISH  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

Classified By: Ambassador Kristen Silverberg for reasons 1.5(b) and (d)

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1. (C) Summary: Ambassador Silverberg and Spanish PermRep to the EU Carlos Bastarache Sagues discussed a range of issues during a courtesy call on September 29. Bastarache described an EU that had made considerable progress since his first posting to Brussels in 1979, but that still struggled to act quickly and decisively. He expressed Spain,s support for EU enlargement to Croatia, Serbia, and Turkey, though he warned that the Union,s "digestion" was being tested. Energy security was a difficult question, subject to Member State differences, but combating climate change was an issue where "Europe exists" as a united entity. On transatlantic unity, Bastarache said Spain supports the initiative to start a new transatlantic dialogue, and that the EU and U.S. could continue to work on practical cooperation in the meantime. Bastarache said the best the U.S. could hope for from Spain on the Serb ICJ case would be an abstention, and that the U.S. and EU need to offer incentives to the Serbs to integrate with the West. When pressed on the EU,s response to Russian activities in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, he said the important thing about the Georgia crisis was that the EU showed unity. Pressed further, however, he admitted that EU unity can often be "at the lowest common denominator" and that it will be difficult to change Russian behavior. The Spanish Permanent Representation to the EU welcomed the news that container security would be on the agenda for the next TEC meeting. End Summary.

#### Financial Crisis

2.(C) Bastarache started the meeting by lamenting the day's financial news. When Ambassador Silverberg noted the consequences for the European economy, Bastarache said it would affect every Member State differently. Spain, for example, was facing serious problems in its housing sector, but its banking sector remains strong.

#### EU Enlargement

3.(C) Amb. Silverberg praised the integrating function of the EU, which gives countries like Serbia and Turkey incentives to turn toward the West. Bastarache agreed, but said the EU,s "digestion" was being tested. The Union of 27 would soon be 28 with Croatia,s eventual accession, but the expansion makes decisionmaking more difficult. Spain supports Turkey and Serbia,s bids for membership, and would support opening the accession chapter on energy with Turkey. Turkey,s membership was subject to opposition from states like Cyprus and France, however. Serbia, on the other hand, would eventually become a member, he predicted. He agreed

with Amb. Silverberg that the process toward EU enlargement can help quell latent instability on Europe's borders, but said it was not the only way to promote security. For instance, he said Morocco is not entirely stable and lies just miles away from Spain's coast, but would never become an EU Member State.

#### Energy Policy and Climate Change

4.(C) Bastarache said a common energy policy was a difficult issue in the EU, given Member State differences, but that the EU was united on the need for action to combat climate change. He expressed the hope that a new President would change U.S. climate change policy. Amb. Silverberg responded by emphasizing elements of continuity in U.S. policy. For example, both Sen. McCain and Sen. Obama have said that any final deal on climate change must include commitments from India and China, and Congress would not approve a U.S. commitment without a similar commitment from developing economies. She stressed that it was up to the U.S. and the EU to work together to secure commitments from all major economies.

#### New Transatlantic Dialogue

5.(C) Bastarache said the idea of a renewed transatlantic dialogue is the "fashion of the day" in Brussels and asked for Amb. Silverberg's thoughts. Amb. Silverberg said the recent French paper on transatlantic relations made some good points, but focused on how to resolve relatively minor disagreements rather than how to work together to meet

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ambitious goals. She also stressed that while the U.S. is open to a dialogue, we do not want to get bogged down discussing theoretical issues; we need to work together on practical questions. Bastarache said relations had improved since 2003, but that the U.S. and EU might still need to "renew our vows" after the disagreement over Iraq. We could do this, he said, while still cooperating on practical matters.

#### Serbia and Kosovo

6.(C) Bastarache said Spain had not decided on a position regarding Serbia's referral of Kosovo's independence to the ICJ, but could probably agree to abstain from a vote if it were the EU's common position. On Kosovo, Amb. Silverberg said whatever our differences on recognition, it is important to emphasize to the Serbs that partition is not an option. She also stressed the importance of taking advantage of this period of calm to deploy EULEX throughout the country. Bastarache said the West needs to offer the Serbs incentives, rather than simply tell them Kosovo is independent. Amb. Silverberg agreed that we need to offer a Western outlook to Serbia, but said we also need to send a message that Kosovo's independence is irreversible.

#### Russia-Georgia

17. (C) Amb. Silverberg praised the EU's action during the conflict in Georgia, but said the U.S. is concerned about Russia consolidating its forces in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. She stressed that Brussels needs to make clear that Russia has not complied with its obligations until it returns to status quo ante. Bastarache repeatedly stressed that keeping EU unity on the issue was critical. When pressed, he acknowledged that unity is often preserved only at the "lowest common denominator," but that unity itself was an important message to the Russians. Amb. Silverberg argued that the EU should work to raise that lowest common denominator to show Moscow its strength, not just its unity.

#### Container Security

18. (C) Bastarache seemed surprised by the Ambassador's focus on high-risk trade corridors, saying the Commission had

told Member States the U.S. was stalling and refusing to have a conversation about alternative approaches. Amb. Silverberg stressed that, while the Administration had opposed the 100 percent scanning requirement, Congress had passed the legislation because of a legitimate concern about the adequacy of port security. Rather than continuing to argue about 100 percent scanning, we need to work together proactively to find a way forward to ensure the security of our ports. The U.S. proposal focusing on high-risk corridors is an attempt to do that. Following the conversation, the Spanish Permanent Representation contacted post to confirm that container security would be on the TEC agenda and was pleased to hear that it would be.

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